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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000493

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [KCRM](#) [KCOR](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: PRESIDENT OF IJAW YOUTH COUNCIL SAYS
STATE SECURITY ALLOCATIONS PROLONG CONFLICT

Classified By: Consul General Donna M. Blair, Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Dr. Chris Ekiyor, President of the Ijaw Youth Council, (protect throughout) condemned the tactics of the military Joint Task Force (JTF) in the Niger Delta, alleging that the JTF is so closely linked to illegal bunkering activities that it seeks to prolong the conflict rather than end it. JTF forces frequently attack not militant camps but the home villages from which militants come or which they have recently visited, killing women and children; recent attacks include Agge, Eleme Tombia and St. Michael's Christian Camp. Federal funding for security prolongs the conflict; the states only receive security funds if they can show that they suffer from a high degree of insecurity, Ekiyor said. Rivers State alone receives 1 billion Naira (approximatesly USD 8.5 million) per month for which there is no requirement for accounting. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On November 4, the President of the Ijaw Youth Council, Dr. Chris Ekiyor, told PolOffs that key figures in the JTF have allied themselves with criminal elements among the militants in order to profit from the lucrative trade in stolen oil. In consequence, the JTF has no interest in ending the violence in the Niger Delta, but rather seeks to prolong the insecurity in the region by provoking violence, while at the same time protecting those criminal elements with which it is in league. (Note: this is equally true of many elements involved in militancy, who also exploit the current lawlessness in the region for personal gain.)

JTF Attacks, with Impunity, Three Villages

¶3. (C) Ekiyor said that the JTF had replaced both the police and the judiciary in the areas in which it operates, ensuring that no one attacked by the JTF had recourse to due process. The real criminals, those who profit most from the illegal bunkering, are not exposed or attacked, but many innocent people have been the victim of excessive force by the JTF when it retaliates against the militants. Ekiyor listed three examples where entire villages had been attacked by the JTF: St. Michael's Christian Camp in Edo State in May, Tombia in Rivers State in June, and Agge in Ekeremor local government area in Bayelsa State in early August. In all three cases, Ekiyor said that the JTF alleged that militants had passed through or had family ties to the communities attacked. Ekiyor stressed, however, that these were not militant camps.

No Accountability for Security Funds

14. (C) Ekiyor said that the Federal Government pays large sums to the states for security and stressed that money earmarked for security does not have to be accounted for. One billion naira (roughly 8.5 million USD) is paid each month to Rivers State alone for security, according to Ekiyor. (Note: Poloffs have heard similar allegations from other sources. End Note.) State and local governments only receive these funds, however, if they can show a high level of insecurity in their jurisdiction. As a result, Ekiyor argued, government officials are not interested in achieving a solution to the situation in the Niger Delta.

MEND's September Ceasefire Holds; Attacks Criminal

15. (C) Ekiyor claimed that all attacks on persons, oil installations and vessels since the declaration of a unilateral ceasefire by the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) on September 21 have been criminal. However, Ekiyor insisted that criminals, particularly those operating in Port Harcourt and those involved in the kidnapping of individuals, should be arrested and brought to trial, not merely killed, as is the JTF mandate. He emphasized that many people in the Niger Delta view the officials of the state government as "bigger criminals" than the militants. As long as government leaders are allowed to retain their ill-gotten gains, he said, it will be hard to convince the militants and others in the Niger Delta that

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crime is wrong.

16. (C) In response to a question, Ekiyor said that, in the absence of effective government, militant leaders had taken over many of the functions of government. He cited as an example a hospital in Delta State that had been funded by the militant leader Government Ekpompolo, also known as "Tom Polo."

17. (U) This cable was cleared by Embassy Abuja.
BLAIR